

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

VOLUME XXIII.

ASHLAND, O., THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1901.

No. 13.

Editorial

Special Announcement

Please turn to page 16, and note that each week the list of subscriptions is growing larger tho very slowly. The effort will be continued beyond April 1, and we invite all the districts to make a special effort to secure their share of the 500. The number can easily be reached. Have you made a special effort to secure *one* new subscriber? Let it not be said that the 500 can not be secured until each one interested has made an effort.

Audacity of Faith

We will give you a Bible illustration, words that fell from the lips of the Master, perhaps the most wonderful utterances of that most wonderful man. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." A characteristic of all teachers and philosophers who have a reputation to build, or a builded reputation to guard, is the conservativeness of their speech. They are careful not to say in public anything rash, or that might be unable to stand a critical test, either philosophic, scientific or literary. Now it is inconceivable that any of the world's well known intellectual lights should have had the penetration or the courage to make such a statement as stands at the head of this article. Look at it closely for a moment. There are no limitations in the statement. You search in vain for bounds, you are unable to find the slightest holding for human prudence. Look again. It is a statement that touches human experience at every point. All the millions in the world, or that have ever been in the world, can stand up and deny or affirm, as experience may dictate to them. Think of it; one man makes statements that the assembled intellect of the world would not dare to make: a carpenter utters promises that all the world's bankers could not perform, nor its emperors, nor its navies, nor its armies, nor its gold and silver. And bear in mind moreover that the personage who uttered these words knew perfectly that his whole career, all his influence in the world, the destiny of his cause, depended upon the absolute accuracy, truth, sanity, soundness and wisdom of his utterances.

Now we can easily suppose that what the Lord said in this instance may be challenged. A man may say: I have asked and *not* received. I have sought and *not* found. I have knocked, and it has *not* been opened to me. But wisdom would reply: What is asking, and seeking, and knocking? Is it the language of desire? or is it the language of need? It could not in the Lord's mind and meaning be the

language of desire, for man desires that which is evil, and certainly the Lord has nowhere promised to gratify a desire of that description. Men desire all sorts of self indulgence, and all sorts of pleasure and possessions that eventuate in a blighting curse, and it is neither the will of God nor the meaning of his promise that these desires should be ministered unto by his providence. Evidently then it is the language of need, whatever the character of that need may be. Now there must be a *sense* of need before it can frame itself in the language of petition, and the deeper that sense, the more vivid and poignant, the more it presses upon the soul, the more earnest and importunate will be the asking, the seeking and the knocking. This kind of prayer, this kind of asking and seeking, based upon need alone and not upon desire, except as desire and need run on the same line, is the kind that receives the promise. Doubtless we often ask for things we do not need, like ignorant children who cry for hurtful indulgences, but when our real need finds expression in prayer, and goes on from the *less* earnest asking, to the *more* earnest seeking, and still on to *importunate knocking*, it is not too much to say that all the resources of God and eternity are pledged to the performance of the divine promise that we shall receive, that we shall find, and that it shall be opened to us.

At this point the audacity of the promise must be matched by the boldness of our faith. It is a tremendous expectation that "God shall supply all your need (mark the word 'need' here and not desire) according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19. Our faith must match this promise. And why shouldn't it? If a neighbor worth ten thousand dollars should promise to give us a hundred thousand, we would have reasonable doubts both of his ability and his willingness to perform his promise. But if an honest millionaire should promise us five hundred thousand, we would have no difficulty in believing it. The confidence and joy of possession would date from the very moment he gave us his promisory note. We would have far less difficulty in believing that we would get our half million from the millionaire, than we would in believing that we would get two dollars from a man who was worth only one dollar. In other words, the character and scope of the promise is nothing: the character and resources of the one who *makes* the promise are everything. Faith has to take account of these only. Think of it. You have God's promisory note to supply all your need. It is impossible to exhaust his resources. Your asking is to be limited only by the bounds of your necessity. Why are you discontented and anxious? "Why art thou cast down, Oh, my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God."